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ACTION ARA-01

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-17	AID-01	AMAD-01	CEA-01	CIAE-00	COME-00
	CTME-00	C-01	DODE-00	DS-00	EB-01	EXIM-06	E-01
	FRB-03	HA-09	H-01	INRE-00	INR-01	IO-19	ITC-01
	JUSE-00	LAB-04	L-03	ADS-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02
	OMB-01	OPIC-08	PA-01	PM-01	PRS-01	P-01	RP-10
	SIL-01	SNP-01	SP-01	SR-01	SS-01	STR-18	TRSE-00
	T-01	ASDS-01	/121W				

-----666520 251943Z /38

O 251941Z SEP 92  
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4191  
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM  
USIA WASHDC 8772

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CARACAS 10239

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR  
TAGS: ASEC, ELAB, PHUM, PGOV, PREL, VE  
SUBJECT: FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS/REACTION REGARDING THE RIOS  
ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT

REF: CARACAS 10159

1. (C) SUMMARY: THE POLICE HAVE DETAINED ADDITIONAL  
SUSPECTS IN THE SEPT. 23 ATTACK ON LABOR LEADER ANTONIO  
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RIOS, BUT SO FAR HAVE NOT RELEASED ANY OFFICIAL  
INFORMATION ON THE GROUP WHICH CARRIED OUT THE  
ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT. PRESIDENT PEREZ AND OTHERS HAVE  
BLAMED THE MEDIA FOR CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT OF EXTREME  
CRITICISM OF POLITICAL LEADERS, WHICH ALLEGEDLY PROMOTES  
VIOLENCE. THE VICE MINISTER OF INTERIOR TOLD US THAT  
INTERROGATION OF THE FBL GUNMAN HAS SO FAR PROVIDED VERY  
LITTLE INFORMATION. GOV DOES NOT BELIEVE THE FBL IS A  
LARGE ORGANIZATION, BUT THEY ARE CONCERNED THAT THE  
SHOOTING MAY SPARK OTHER GROUPS/INDIVIDUALS TO TRY SIMILAR  
ASSASSINATIONS. END SUMMARY.

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RIOS: CRITICAL CONDITION BUT FAVORABLE PROGNOSIS  
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2. (U) LABOR LEADER AND CONGRESSMAN ANTONIO RIOS REMAINS IN INTENSIVE CARE IN CRITICAL CONDITION AFTER AN ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON SEPT. 23 (REFTEL AND PREVIOUS). FAMILY MEMBERS REPORT THAT DOCTORS SAY HIS PROGNOSIS IS FAVORABLE. ON SEPT. 24 HE WAS TRANSFERRED TO A DIFFERENT HOSPITAL WHERE SURGEONS WILL STUDY THE POSSIBILITY OF REMOVING A BULLET WHICH IS LODGED NEAR A LUNG.

3. (U) ON A RELATED NOTE, IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS OF SEPT. 24, THE HOUSE OF THE DOCTOR ATTENDING RIOS WAS BROKEN INTO BY AN UNKNOWN MAN. SOME VALUABLES WERE TAKEN AND THE DOCTOR'S 24-YEAR OLD DAUGHTER WAS SEIZED. THE DAUGHTER ESCAPED FROM HER CAPTOR AFTER CRASHING THE FAMILY CAR, AND THE MAN FLED. THE INCIDENT IS BEING REGARDED AS A COMMON CRIME, NOT DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE RIOS CASE.

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SECURITY FORCES DETAIN OTHER POSSIBLE CONSPIRATORS  
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4. (U) THE TWO ASSAILANTS DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE SEPT. 23 ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT -- CESAR PENA LA CRUZ (WHO FIRED THE SHOTS) AND NORMA AZUAJE (WHO WAS TO DRIVE THE GET-AWAY MOTORCYCLE) -- REMAIN IN CUSTODY. IN ADDITION, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTN&6\$: 9| 09)8:3 -, \$ .8)85-46 LEADERS, BUSINESSMEN, POLITICIANS, AND NEWSPAPERMEN. THIS IS BEING TIED TO ALLEGATIONS THAT A BROADER WAVE OF ASSASSINATIONS WAS PLANNED.

VICE MINISTER EGUI  
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6. (C) AT MIDDAY ON SEPT. 25, INTERIOR VICE MINISTER EGUI TOLD CHARGE THAT SO FAR THE INTERROGATION OF PENA LA CRUZ HAD PROVIDED VERY LITTLE INFORMATION. PENA LA CRUZ HAS REFUSED TO IMPLICATE ANY OTHERS. AUTHORITIES BELIEVE THAT THE FBL EXISTS AS AN ORGANIZATION, ALTHOUGH THEY DO NOT BELIEVE THAT IT IS LARGE (ONE REASON THEY THINK THERE IS AN ORGANIZATION IS THE SIMULTANEOUS WAY IN WHICH COMMUNIQUE WERE MADE KNOWN TO THE MEDIA). THEY ARE CONVINCED THERE IS NO CONNECTION BETWEEN THE FBL AND THE

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OFFICERS OF THE MBR-200, WHICH STAGED THE FEBRUARY 4  
REBELLION.

7. (C) EGUI ADDED THAT THE GOV WAS CONCERNED THAT THE  
ATTACK ON RIOS MIGHT STIMULATE COPY-CAT ATTACKS BY OTHER  
GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS.

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CAP ASSAILS THE MEDIA  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 CARACAS 10239

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SUBJECT: FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS/REACTION REGARDING THE RIOS

8. (U) IN HIS WEEKLY THURSDAY MORNING RADIO ADDRESS, PRESIDENT PEREZ LINKED THE MEDIA TO THE ATTACK ON RIOS. CAP ASSERTED THAT SOME SECTORS OF THE MEDIA DO NOT PERFORM AN INFORMATIONAL ROLE BUT RATHER HAVE BECOME "POLITICAL SECTS" WHICH DEDICATE THEMSELVES TO DENIGRATING THE INSTITUTIONS OF THE COUNTRY, INCLUDING THE PRESIDENCY, THE  
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CONGRESS, THE COURTS, THE POLITICAL PARTIES, AND THE LABOR UNIONS. HE THEN QUESTIONED IF THERE WERE NOT CONSEQUENCES TO THESE ACTIONS, AND SUGGESTED THAT THE MEDIA WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR PREPARING THE CLIMATE AND GUIDING THE "MURDEROUS ARMS FOR PERSONAL ATTACKS." SUBSEQUENTLY, CAP SAID THAT HE WAS NOT CONTEMPLATING REPRESSIVE MEASURES, BUT THAT HE WOULD ACT TO ASSURE LAWS ARE COMPLIED WITH AND THAT DEMOCRACY IS NOT TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF.

9. (U) COPEI CONGRESSMAN MIGUEL HENRIQUE OTERO (WHO IS ALSO THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE INFLUENTIAL NEWSPAPER "EL NACIONAL"), PROMPTLY AND CATEGORICALLY REJECTED THE CHARGE THAT THE MEDIA COULD BE BLAMED FOR CREATING THE CONDITIONS IN THE COUNTRY WHICH MADE POSSIBLE SUCH ACTS AS THE ASSAULT ON RIOS. OTERO SAID THAT HE REJECTED TERRORISM AND REBELLION, ADDING THAT THE ATTEMPT TO BLAME THE PRESS WAS BECOMING A "SYSTEMATIC PRACTICE." THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM, HE DECLARED, IS NOT THE PRESS, BUT THE FACT THAT THE COUNTRY IS IN A "POLITICAL CRISIS."

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH ISSUES A COMMUNIQUE  
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10. (U) IN A COMMUNIQUE ISSUED ON SEPT. 24, THE EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH URGED AUTHORITIES NOT TO RESPOND TO THE CRISIS IN A DISPROPORTIONATE, REPRESSIVE MANNER, CAUTIONING THAT SUCH A RESPONSE WOULD ONLY FURTHER THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE. THE CHURCH CALLED ON ALL THOSE IN A POSITION OF LEADERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY TO PUT ASIDE "PARTISAN AND SECTORAL EGOISMS" AND SEEK OUT CONVERGENCE IN ORDER TO OVERCOME THE

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GRAVE CRISIS FACING THE COUNTRY. THIS CRISIS, THE CHURCH  
STATEMENT DECLARED, MANIFESTED ITSELF IN "THE LOSS OF  
CREDIBILITY IN THE BASIC INSTITUTIONS OF THE NATIONAL  
LIFE." DEMOCRACY WAS THREATENED, BUT THE SOLUTION WAS NOT  
LESS DEMOCRACY BUT RATHER MORE AND BETTER DEMOCRACY.

OTHER REACTIONS  
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11. (U) WITH THE ARMED FORCES ASSURING THAT THE  
SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY WAS UNDER COMPLETE CONTROL,  
MINISTER OF DEFENSE JIMENEZ SANCHEZ PUBLICLY EXPRESSED THE  
VIEW THAT THOSE MILITARY OFFICERS INVOLVED IN THE FEBRUARY  
4 REBELLION (I.E., THE BOLIVARIAN REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT -  
200) WERE NOT ASSOCIATED IN ANY WAY WITH THE ATTEMPT ON  
THE LIFE OF RIOS.

12. (U) WITHIN THE CONGRESS AND IN POLITICAL CIRCLES,  
THERE WERE NUMEROUS SPEECHES CONDEMNING THE ATTACK ON RIOS  
AND THE INTRODUCTION OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE, WITH SOME  
SPEAKERS ECHOING THE THEME THAT THE MEDIA WAS AT LEAST  
PARTIALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT HAD HAPPENED.  
SPOKESPERSONS FOR THE LEFTIST CAUSA R DEFENDED THEIR PARTY  
FROM ACCUSATIONS -- PRINCIPALLY FROM THE GOVERNMENT  
(MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR) AND AD -- THAT ITS  
ANTI-GOVERNMENT STANCE SOMEHOW LINKED IT WITH THE ATTEMPT  
ON RIOS' LIFE.

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